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Santangelo, Orazio Donato Lideon de Cortelli

# THE TWO OR THREE MILLIONS.

## NO APPROPRIATION RECOMMENDED.

The President of the United States of America, James K. Polk, in his late annual message of December 9th, 1846, says:

"Near the close of your last session, for *reasons* communicated to Congress, I deemed it *important*, as a measure *for securing a speedy peace with Mexico*, that a sum of money should be appropriated, and placed in the power of the Executive, *similar* to that which had been made upon two former occasions, during the administration of President Jefferson.

"On the twenty-sixth of February, 1803, an appropriation of two millions of dollars was made, and placed at the disposal of the President—its object is well known—it was at that time in contemplation to *acquire Louisiana* from France, and it was intended to be applied as a part of the consideration which might be paid for that territory.

"On the 13th, of January, 1807, the same sum was in like manner appropriated, with a view to the *purchase* of the Floridas from Spain.

"The appropriations were made to *facilitate* negociations, and as a means to *enable the President* to accomplish the important objects in view. Though it did not become necessary for the President to use these appropriations, yet a state of things might have arisen, in which it would have been *highly important for him* to do so, and the *wisdom* of making them cannot be doubted.

"It is *believed* that the measure recommended at your last Session met with the approbation of *decided* majorities in both Houses of Congress. Indeed, in *different forms*, a bill making an appropriation of two millions of dollars, passed each House, and it is *much to be regretted* that it did not become a law.

"The reasons, which induced me to recommend the measure at that time, STILL EXIST: and I *again* submit the sub-

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ject for your consideration, and suggest the importance of early action upon it.

"Should it be made, and be not needed, it will remain in the Treasury: *should it be deemed proper* to apply it, in whole or in part, it will be accounted for as other public expenditures."

It is keenly to be regretted that such a recommendation, from a president of the United States of America, as that above transcribed from his message, should seriously be made a subject of public discussion in the legislative halls of our federal Congress. Indeed the alleged object of the recommended measure is of itself so obviously contemptible that it would be impossible for the American people to escape the most scornful and humiliating strictures from all foreign nations, as well as the sneers of that very enemy in whose favor this extraordinary appropriation is solicited, and who will not fail to derive "aid and comfort" from the evident embarrassment, in which Mr. Polk implicitly confesses to have been thrown by the wanton, nay malicious, war by him and him alone, provoked.

Viewing this affair under the mildest aspect possible, Mr. Polk would appear to act the part of a brutal school-master, who after having broken the legs of a child for disobedience to one of his insane injunctions endeavors to prevent it from screaming, by placing a sweet cake in its little hands, to avoid being lapidated by the rest of his indignant pupils, or sent to the penitentiary. But on closer examination, we will find much worse than that.

President Polk asked (tho' happily in vain) on the close of the last Session of Congress, August 10th, 1846, two millions of dollars for no other alleged *reason* but to *secure* a *speedy peace* with *Mexico*. He asked *again* in his late message (December 9, 1846) the same sum, for reasons, said he, which STILL EXIST; and he asks now (February 1847), through some of his most eloquent satellites in the Senate not less than THREE millions of dollars, for reasons, of course, considerably increased in importance since August, 1846.

I would, before all, respectfully observe that the quoted precedents under the administration of President Jefferson can by no means be available to justify the appropriation desired by President Polk; first, because a lawless act cannot authorize new violations of the law; and then, because there is not the slightest "*similarity*" between the two cases, which prompted, right or wrong, the solicitations of Mr. Jefferson, and the one on which Mr. Polk grounds his own,

first because amicable transactions for a *purchase* of lands from friendly powers have no analogy with acquisitions of lands already usurped *vi et armis* from a foreign poople: secondly, because purchases from an omnipotent French leader in 1803, and an absolute Spanish monarch in 1806, could never be invalidated under any pretext whatever, whilst a *forced* cession of lands by a Republic, whose territory is *inalienable*, except by the express consent of the whole nation, might at any time be declared null and void: thirdly and finally because the blame of a *bribe* to agents of *irresponsible* sellers, with a view to obtain advantageous terms in a civil transaction, could only remain with the persons bribed; whilst a mere attempt on our part to *bribe* Mexican leaders to obtain through their influential power, the acquiescence of the whole Mexican nation to our lawless depredations, and a "speedy peace with her," would evidently prove tantamount to an open confession on our part, both of the criminal injustice of the war we are waging against Mexico, and to a still more degrading acknowledgement of our *inability* to continue it with success.

Now, as to the "still" existing reasons, for which the appropriation of two millions of dollars was recommended by Mr. Polk in August 1846, we shall speedily see that neither now, nor at any other preceding period, any reasonable probability existed in favor of the solicited appropriation. I shall first show that, even in the supposition of Mr. Polk having had some honorable or dishonorable "reasons" to advance that request in August 1846, neither any of his own reasons, nor those of any other person, now exist for placing at his disposal any sum of money whatever, for the alleged purpose of "securing a speedy peace with Mexico."

To understand correctly and fully the force of this *vital* argument, let us glance at the plan of Mr. Polk's war against Mexico.

"I must have, said he, by all means, and with apparent "*uprightness*, a large part of the Mexican empire. I shall "begin by securing the *constitutional* annexation of Texas "to the United States. Mexico, who had repeatedly protes- "ted that this annexation would be looked upon by her as "a *declaration of war*, will naturally resent, and interrupt "all diplomatic intercourse with my government. She will "likewise retaliate by suspending the payment of the in- "demnity due to American Claimants pursuant to a public "treaty. But, in her powerless condition, she will go no "farther in her vengeance, and then I would not have suffi- "cient cause for the wholesale spoliation I propose—I shall

"then send to Mexico a negotiator for peace, but vested "with such a character that it will be impossible for her to "receive him—I shall at the same time push an army to "Rio Grande del Norte, under the double assumption that "the whole territory east of said Rio, *from its mouth to its* "*source*, is, or must be, an integral part of the wilderness of "Texas, and that it will be my duty to guard that boundary "line against Mexican threats—For the same *indisputable* "reasons, I shall point my cannon on the Mexican town of "Matamoras, and challenge her garrison to fight. A fight "will then be inevitable with my troops, and then I shall be "able to produce three counts against Mexico:

"1st. To have violated a public treaty by suspending "*causelessly* the payment of the indemnity due by her to "American claimants: 2ndly. To have rejected *insultingly* "an American Minister, through whom I had sent her the ""olive branch:" 3rdly. To have shed American blood "on American soil.

"I will then have acquired a full *right*, nay I will appear "in *duty* bound to solicit from Congress a declaration that "war exists *by the fact of Mexico*, and I shall then invade "her by sea and land on all her assailable points, for which "timely preparations shall be made in advance. A quick "and general occupation (which I shall not call *conquest*) "will then take place, by the American army, of the Califor- "nias, New-Mexico, Chihuahua, Sonora, Sinaloa, Durango, "Coahuila, Tamaulipas, New-Leon to the Sierra Madre "&c. the annexation of which provinces to the United "States will immediately be proclaimed by my Generals, "conformably with a law of nations of my own making— "whilst my invincible squadrons will blockade or capture, "without firing a gun, all the ports of Mexico on both oceans, "she having fortunately no navy at all to resist my chivalric "aggressions; and then, frightened to death at such a sud- "den visitation of God, and interiorly lacerated by federal, "central and monarchical parties, without money, credit, "soldiers and efficient leaders &c. my dear sister Mexico will "fall on her knees, and implore, or thankfully accept, a peace "on *my own terms* of course, on the basis of the *uti possidetis;* "my government generously assuming her debt towards "American citizens (who will never have a cent), in com- "pensation of the enormous expenses of a war she had most "unjustly declared to the United States. I will then have "acquired for my beloved country, more than half of the "Mexican empire, causing at the same time Europe and the "world to be astonished at the sublimity of my genius, and

" posterity to adore my name in the pantheon of immortality, " much above those of Cæsar, Alexander, Napoleon, and " Washington himself &c." *Dixit et factum est!*

In August 1846, the execution of this inimitable scheme was triumphantly going on, under peculiar circumstances, which in his opinion could not fail to secure its full success. Mexico was still a central Republic, although a large federal party existed in her northern departments, and in Yucatan. A new Mexican Congress, to whom had been referred a new proposal of peace from Mr. Polk, was to assemble on the 6th of December of the same year. A conspiracy had been formed against General Paredes, the then acting President, who was not favorable to federalism. Santa Anna, exiled in Havana, and formerly the destroyer of the federal Constitution of his country, was now promising his protection to the federal party in Mexico to have his regress thereto protected by them.—And Mr. Polk, in his high conceptions, saw the moment to *conquer* a speedy peace. He thought that Santa Anna could easily overthrow Paredes, re-conquer the dictatorship, influence the elections for the new Mexican Congress, in a word, exercise without control all the functions of an absolute sovereign, and restore by his own authority the peace between the two republics. He opened, then, with that chief, secret negotiations—and hence the necessity for himself to have ready *præ manibus* two or three millions of dollars.

In December 1846, when Mr. Polk asked again from Congress an appropriation of two millions of dollars, for the same *praiseworthy* object of " securing a peace with Mexico," the Mexican affairs were entirely changed; and at this present day of February 1847, when the propriety of making the appropriation is to be discussed in Congress, not only have all the former " reasons" of Mr. Polk disappeared, but the utmost impossibility of obtaining peace, either by bribery or by force of arms, is firmly established.

A chronological synopsis of all such movements of Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, as have hitherto had an immediate bearing on my subject, must indispensably precede my further demonstrations.

Whilst, through Mr. Slidell Makenzie, President Polk was entertaining mysterious correspondence with Santa Anna in Havana, despatches dated 27th July, 1846, were sent by our Cabinet to that of Mexico, and a *confidential* message, dated the 4th of the following August, was sent to our Senate by Mr. Polk, wherein he said amongst other *very important* things,

"Should the Mexican government be *willing* to *cede* any "portion of their territory to the United States, we ought to "pay them a fair equivalent, a just and honorable peace, "*not conquest*, being our purpose in the prosecution of war. "It might become necessary that I should have it in my "power to *advance* a portion of the consideration money for "any cession of territory which may be made.

To extort, *à coups de canon* from an unwilling nation a *cession* of territory, is by no means, "*a conquest*" in the good sense of our President; it is merely a genteel eagerness for a just and honorable peace!

On the 8th of August, Santa Anna sailed for Vera Cruz in a British vessel; and on the same day Mr. Polk sent a *public* message to Congress asking two millions of dollars to procure a speedy and honorable peace. This solicitation proved, casually, a failure on the 10th. Santa Anna arrived at Vera Cruz on the 16th undisturbed by our blockading squadron. On the same day, he issued a proclamation complaining of the perfidy of the cabinet of Herrera on the question of the northern frontier of Mexico (to Las Nueces according to Herrera, and to the Sabine, according to Santa Anna) charging Paredes with favoring *monarchical* plans (Santa Anna's own plans), and dolefully regarding his countrymen as doomed either to become a prey to Anglo-American ambition, or to fly, for the safety of their national existence, to *monarchical* forms under a European Prince (and this is his own *desideratum* hoping no longer for Mexican dictatorships). But to the point.

Santa Anna had returned to Mexico with the apparent design to espouse again the cause of the federal party by him formerly crushed to death, to revenge himself upon the *centralists*, who, when banished in December 1844, had deserted him. He received, then, in Vera Cruz, the congratulations of two sons of that Mexican Aristides, Dr. Valentin Gomez Farias, who sternly faithful to the federal system, had been in 1835 cruelly persecuted by the traitor Santa Anna, and compelled to take refuge, with his numerous family, in New Orleans.

Before the arrival of Santa Anna at Vera Cruz, President Paredes had already been superseded by Gen. Salas, who immediately after having taken the oath of office, called a Congress, for the 6th of December, to amend and proclaim the federal Constitution of 1824. Meanwhile, Santa Anna retired to his farm near Vera Cruz.

The "Diario" of the 2d of September published the an-

swer of President Salas to the above mentioned communication of our Cabinet, in these terms:

"The existing supreme government, being determined "not to swerve in any degree from the national will, has "deferred replying to the proposition made by the Govern- "ment of the United States, to come to a negotiation upon "questions pending between the two countries, until the "nation itself, assembled in Congress through its represen- "tatives, shall decide a matter so important, without con- "senting in any manner to waive a discussion of the causes "of the war (the annexation of Texas) on the pretence that "they should be considered merely as "past events (words "of Mr. Buchanan) belonging to history"—and that, until "Congress shall determine the relations of Mexico with the "republic of the United States, they will continue such as "the present Executive found them in taking charge of the "administration."

This answer had been preceded by a decision of a cabinet council held in Mexico on the 22nd of August, stating that "if the United States wanted to have California, New Mexico, indemnities &c. Mexico should prefer war."

On the 14th of September, Santa Anna, being in the town of Ayotla on his way to the city of Mexico, received a note from the minister of war, J. N. Almonte, offering him, on the part of the acting president Salas, the supreme executive power—and on the same day, he replied refusing the power, contented with the command in chief of the army destined to fight a *perfidious and daring enemy.* "The Mexican republic, said he, must reconquer the insignia of her glory, and obtain a fortunate issue, if victorious, or disappear from the face of the earth, if defeated."

On the 15th, Santa Anna reached the capital, and his first care was the organization of a powerful army. He heard there with the utmost indifference of the capitulation of Monterey, which had occurred on the 24th, and began a "movement towards the north."

On the 3d of October, whilst in the city of Queretaro on his way to San Luis Potosi, the great rendezvous of the army, where he designed to establish also his head-quarters, he wrote a letter wherein he said: "I am now about to display all the energy of my character, which is habitual to me, and the Americans will *very soon* succumb, or I shall cease to exist."

On the 10th of October, informed that the American Gen. Taylor proposed to occupy Leona-Vicario (Saltillo), he sent

orders for the evacuation of that place, with a view of concentrating all the disposable Mexican forces in San Luis Potosi.

Under date of the 10th of November, in answer to a letter received from Gen. Taylor relating to certain prisoners, he wrote the following:

"From the spirit and decision manifested by all Mexi-
"cans, you should banish all idea of peace, while a single
"North-American in arms treads upon the territory of the
"Republic, and there remain in front of its ports the squad-
"rons which make war upon them."

About that time Santa Anna received information of the "accidental" failure of the appropriation of two millions of dollars recommended by president Polk to Congress in his message of the 10th of August, with the assurance that it would be recommended again to Congress on its meeting in December. From that moment he was observed to labor under an unusual moroseness, to employ more than one amanuensis to write his correspondence, and to inundate the department of war with unceasing demands for money and military stores of all kinds. He was, on the other hand, generally and publicly spoken of as playing his card with a view to a *speedy peace*, according to a certain bargain made at Cuba with some agents of the American government, promising that the United States should remain in full possession of the invaded Mexican provinces, pocketing a large sum of money offered him by president Polk, and depending upon the government of the United States to be sustained in the government of Mexico. This last part of the rumor was thought, however, to be rather too ridiculous, seriously to have actuated the great mind of the Mexican hero. The fact is that he not only refrained from decisive operations, but also ordered the evacuation of Tampico, and only exercised his numerous troops in marches and countermarches, keeping the American forces in check, evidently with the intent to wait for the result of the renewed efforts of Mr. Polk to obtain from Congress the appropriation, which he coveted so much.

The Mexican Congress met on the 6th of December last, and one of its first steps was to declare that "no peace would be treated or thought of until every hostile foot shall have cleared from the Mexican soil, and every vessel that lines the Mexican coast be withdrawn"—and one of the first recommendations of Santa Anna to Congress was the *confiscation* of all American property, in order to carry on

the war, and the making *prisoners of war* all Americans residing in the country, as a *fatal stroke*, said he, to those pirates (ourselves).

On the 23d of the same month, Santa Anna was declared *provisional* president of the United Mexican States, by a vote of eleven states to nine, through their respective representatives in Congress, and Valentin Gomez Farias, vice-president. They both took the oath of office "to observe and cause to be observed, the *federal* constitution of 1824, and to maintain the independence and *integrity* of the national territory." Farias, in the absence of Santa Anna, assumed the duties of acting president.

From this historical statement of facts, all persons are enabled to perceive that the "reasons" of the recommendation made by Mr. Polk in August 1846, had already *ceased to exist* in December ultimo. when he solicited *again* from Congress an appropriation of *three millons of dollars;* and that they are utterly destroyed, to revive no more except in his own peculiar brains, this present day of February 1847, when he is still soliciting from Congress the desired appropriation. Santa Anna has spoken—the Mexican congress has spoken—the army, the nation to a man, have spoken—and to complete the measure, Farias is there—the respected and beloved leader of the federalists now in power, is there—the man, to whom all the gold of the universe is less than zero, is there—and he is the president whilst Santa Anna is at the head of the army, and he would prove an impregnable rock against all unpopular attempts of Santa Anna, should he leave the army, and return to the presidential functions. With Farias, no California, no Santa Fe, no Rio Grande, not even the annexed Texas. Therefore, we must fight; and we must do it agreeably to the most baneful and absurd of all moral and political tenets: *our country right or wrong.*

Let us now see upon what ground rested, even in August 1846, those mysterious "reasons," which determined Mr. Polk to recommend, for the first time, to Congress the appropriation in question. These "reasons" were two: 1st. the supposed disunion, poverty, timidity, nay annihilation of the Mexicans, especially in consequence of our celebrated victories of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma: 2dly. the proverbial venality of Santa Anna, who, recalled home from his banishment by a powerful *pronunciamiento* in favor of the federal constitution of 1824, was supposed to be about to go and become again an almighty dictator, from whose will and pleasure alone we

could obtain, for a dish of lentils, as large a portion of the Mexican territory as we desired.

These were the "reasons," and these reasons were but ridiculous dreams produced by an indigest notion of the true character of the Mexicans, and of the true position and importance of Santa Anna.

In speaking of the Mexicans, I intend to point out a mass of seven millions of ignorant Indians, and other colored automata, blindly depending on the oracle of nearly another million of Spaniards and Creoles, who form the whole white population of Mexico. As individuals, they are with few exceptions a set of corrupt, revengeful, mistrustful, hypocritical, treacherous thieves, tho' prodigal, gay and sociable fellows, not without courage, and decidedly good soldiers if well commanded. A tenth part of the white population only, and a fifth of the *mestizos*, may be said to receive some education, a monacal education, however, except a few who are sent to study in foreign colleges. As a nation they are remarkable for an incomparable love of country. They are in this respect as proud as those ancient *hidalgos castellanos*, whose patriotism gave in other times so much celebrity to the Spanish name. But they form, in reality, but a miserable parody of their noble progenitors, for they mistake for love of country a judaical hatred to foreigners, whose refinement they envy, and whose talents they fear. This hatred, and the apprehension that some religious opinions might be introduced in their country not exactly similar to theirs, cause them to unite to a man against foreign invaders, and particularly if they are satisfied that *the right is on their side*. In this case they are ready to immolate on the altar of their country every thing they possess, party opinions, family, friends, life and even personal honor. In a war of national independence, the invaders, however strong and sagacious, have to fear a Sicilian vesper when they least expect it. No money can seduce them. Jackson, in 1829 could not induce Mexico to sell Texas to us for ten millions of dollars. Texas, in 1837, could not buy from Mexico the acknowledgement of her independence for five millions of dollars, besides a *bonus* of two hundred thousand dollars to her agents in the transaction. And now let me relate an anecdote concerning the Mexican Aristides, Gomez Farias. This brave man, whilst in 1835 vice-president, and a federalist, was compelled by the reckless president Santa Anna to fly with all his family to New Orleans, where I was also residing. His indigence obliged him to borrow money, or pawn his valuables every day to sustain his dear children and virtuous wife. Being known to possess in Texas

an immense grant of lands, which, after the declaration of the Texan independence, was exposed to be confiscated, a rich and benevolent foreigner offered 15,000 dollars for it. The answer of Farias was: "que vayan mis hijos á pedir limosna; yo no he de vender tierra mejicana á ningun extrangero."

Now to Santa Anna. Under date of November 19th, 1846, that is, twenty days before the transmission of the late annual message of President Polk to Congress, I wrote to our Honorable Secretary of State, James Buchanan, among other important communications (to which he very gentlemanly returned no answer) the following:

"Santa Anna is the secret head of the monarchical conspiracy in Mexico. Exile from his country, hoping no longer for dictatorships, wishing to return home, but never to live under the authority of any of his countrymen, he conceived in Havana the revival of the famous "Plan de Iguala." Spain, France and England were delighted at it; but the two latter powers desired that Mexico should be made to ask *herself* for a King. To this end all the operations of Santa Anna are now tending. He has been enabled to return to Mexico under his false promise to restore the *federal* constitution of 1824, and destroy that very *centralism*, which had been the work of his own hands. Now, by adroitly fomenting a civil war between those two parties—by opposing but a *temporizing* resistance to our invasion, in order more efficiently to vex the Mexican nation—by squeezing the purses of the monarchists themselves (the clergy, the nobility, the Spanish merchants, many old generals &c.)—and by coaxing and captivating the favor of a large army—a powerful *pronunciamiento* for a constitutional king will take place, a European fleet will appear with Montpensier and dona Luisa at Vera Cruz, and the messages both of Monroe and Polk respecting "non interference" will be laughed at. Texas will then be re-incorporated to New Spain, notwithstanding our volunteers, or ceded, perhaps, to us for a competent sum of money, should Mexico be disposed to sell her, and we to buy her without slavery. As to California, Chihuahua, Coahuila, New-Mexico, on either side of Rio Grande &c., these are gay dreams, excited by mad covetousness supported by criminal military proclamations."

This my tirade is, of course, *prophetic*, but based on no ideal data, as is hitherto proved by the conduct of Santa Anna with regard to his temporizing movements, squeezing purses, fomenting civil dissentions &c. But suppose the motives of his conduct to be different; what can they be? His position is such that it is utterly impossible for him to regain the slight-

est popularity in Mexico but by gaining a complete victory over our army, and clear his country of all American foes. Should he ever be suspected of the least connivance with Mr. Polk to conclude a peace by the cession of any part of the Mexican territory, he is lost. Why then should he remain still inactive at the head of a powerful and costly army, whilst our forces are so situated that they could be cut off on every side by half their numbers! The reason is obvious; he will be *inactive* whilst a hope for the millions offered by Mr. Polk is alive in his breast. A hasty hostile movement would kill that flattering hope. To have our money, and then to fall on our troops with all his power, behold his plan. Would we carry our imbecility so far as to believe, that our money wonld turn a Santa Anna into a good friend of ours! And even if such a miracle could take place, are his means, his forces, his authority such as to make us easy about the result? In no way. We would lose the money, California, New-Mexico, the indemnities, our army, our national honor, and become the fable of the present and future generations. Down, then, with such an appropriation of money.

I have said we would lose *our army*—yes, most assuredly. With the same frankness the defeat of the French in Spain was foretold in 1808 by Talleyrand, and by others loudly predicted that of Napoleon in Egypt and in Russia, without any of them having been accused of affording "aid and comfort" to the enemy. I regret to say that my opinion is fortified by having found all the plans hitherto proposed for the continuation of Polk's war, suggested no doubt by mistaken ideas about the physical, economical, political and moral state of things in Mexico, evidently tending to expose our present or future forces in that country to a fate as awful as inevitable. We have to fight there not a Mexican army, but the whole Mexican nation, and its deleterious climate. Did we not triumph over the English at home? Did not the Texans triumph over the Mexicans at home? Why should not the Mexicans triumph now over us in their country? Has experience not yet taught us that any nation whatever, when united, when fighting for its independence, when satisfied that the right is on its side, is invincible? Mr. Polk will not subdue Mexico with the *chicane du barreau.*

But, even in the supposition that Santa Anna might be enabled to become again the absolute master of Mexico, and grant us *peace* and *lands* without any opposition from the Mexicans, on what guaranty can Mr. Polk rely that Santa Anna would comply with his engagement, after receiving the money? In the

above quoted letter of the 19th November, I said to Mr. Buchanan: "Is it possible that a man (*), known in both worlds as the basest and most infamous of traitors, could have deserved the confidence of a president of the United States of America? Is it possible that, to evince to the world our power, wisdom, bravery, honor and republican grandeur, we should have resorted to vilely bribing a miserable outcast, the assassin of the Alamo and Goliad?"

Suppose this other case. It is the custom with Mexicans to make their *pronunciamientos* during the night; so that you go to bed green and awake red. Should the Mexican people go to bed republicans, and by a nocturnal military revolution, awake subjects of King Montpensier, under a Franco-hispano-Mexican flag, and the government, acting in the name of King Anthony the first, gives official notice of the event to our generals Scott, Taylor &c. with a polite invitation to evacuate forthwith the new kingdom or empire, from San Francisco to Alvarado, and from the Sabine to Acapulco, what will be the course of the at once belligerent and peaceful Mr. Polk? Will he fire on Franco-hispano-Mexican troops? Will he keep Franco-Mexican ports and fortresses? Will he ask from Congress new regiments, more millions &c. to prosecute the war vigorously, that is, to conquer a speedy and honorable peace? Will he declare war against France and Spain? Will he then recover from Santa Anna the money, if paid, or will he send it to King Anthony if not yet in Santa Anna's claws? An answer if you please.

* When in 1825 I first knew this man, this Mexican excellency, and received his most assiduous attentions in Mexico, I understood him to be ambition itself personified; but I thought him animated by honest principles, and was led to conclude that there was in Mexico no man so apt to operate a political and moral reform in that demi-savage nation, as himself. I was utterly ignorant of his origin, past life, private or public, duplicity of character, views of future action &c. On his part, confident to have gained my esteem, he entertained a long and affectionate correspondence with me after my return to the United States. I was subsequently compelled by his treacherous, cowardly, assassin-like conduct, to publish *nine* of his letters, first in a Spanish journal, which I was editing in New Orleans, in 1836, during his invasion of Texas, and then, in a certain voluminous Statement of facts, dated October 22, 1841, when under the amphibious administration of Tyler, Webster & Co. his Commissioners were trying very hard in Washington to deprive me of an indemnity, to which his perfidious and inhuman abuse of power had given me indisputable rights. On both occasions, one of his *nine* letters above mentioned, dated October 11, 1831, attracted the liveliest interest of all readers, for it exhibited at the same time a truly extraordinary specimen of base ambition, stupid selfishness, and the grossest ignorance. And in the aforesaid "Statement of facts," I passed, page 144, a certain sentence, as presiding judge of my own tribunal, on senor Santa Anna, sent it to all the members of Congress, the cabinet, the supreme court, the diplomatic body, and to the state governors, the leading journals, the most famed lawyers &c. Mr. Polk did not see it, I suppose. He will find it at the end of these writings, together with the above epistle of Santa Anna, of 1831. But, *cui bono!*

It has been contended, however, in the Senate, that "the money is wanted not as a *secret* service money, but as money, for which a return was to be made *publicly* before the world—that Mexico owes indemnity for the expenses of the war, and the payment of the claims of our citizens—that to effect this object, a cession of a part of her territory is necessary, she being *supposed* to have no money to pay us—and that no senator would be willing to *take less* (what dignified language!) than New Mexico and Upper California!

Not *as a secret service money:* what then? Doubtless for a purchase. Shall the price of a thing bought be paid before the contract? Shall a contract with a foreign nation be executed without the sanction of the Senate? Wait, then, for this sanction, and then the appropriation shall be made.

*Mexico owes indemnity to our citizens*—Yes; a balance of one million and a half of dollars. She owes nothing yet for unliquidated claims. But she has been compelled by Mr. Polk to suspend the payment of that balance, and she has justly delayed, but not refused, her concurrence to the adjustment of pending claims. Is the delay unjust? Why, then, has not our Government appointed a Commission ad hoc? Because it suits not the mysterious views of Mr. Polk. The constitution designates the Supreme Court of the United States to decide on questions between American citizens and a foreign power.—Why are not these unadjusted claims sent before that supreme tribunal? Because the claimants must be cheated.

*Mexico is supposed to have no money*—and was a mere supposition a just and lawful *casus belli?* Is now this same supposition a reason for "prosecuting the war with vigor," with which Mr. Polk, and his despicable advisers, are still threatening the powerless and innocent target of their covetous and inhuman speculations? Are we, on the other hand, the accountants of the Mexican treasury, to assert with so much gravity that she *has no money?*

*We must have New Mexico and Upper California.* We must! How well this ultra-sultanic language sounds in the mouth of a republican lawgiver! We must! and Mexico says: I must have all that I possessed before the rebellion of my foreign Colonists in Texas. Who is right! Who is wrong? No mediation, we say—no arbitration—not even a suspension of arms to attempt an amicable negotiation—No mercy, no misericorde—Sword, fire, force, caprice, blood, plunder, devastation, military annexations—this is, and must be our *republican* policy, a very honest and glorious one, because we are the strongest, and because Mr. Polk, and his cabinet-makers, have nothing to fear from the balls of an enraged victim of their

shameful schemes. Bah! this the nineteenth century will not allow, sir.

Our logic is evidently perverted by errors, common indeed to the ignorant and inexperienced of all countries, but peculiarly so amongst infant nations, as ours undoubtedly is. This accounts for the numberless blunders, which are keeping our society in continual and disgusting turmoils, the necessary effect of a precarious and anarchical existence. We believe, par example, that the respectability of a man is determined by his office or titles, and not by his own character—that our conceptions are beyond the comprehension of the rest of mankind—that we must judge of a work from the idea we have formed of the author—that the merit of men is to be measured from the result of his feats, without any regard to the true causes of that result—that every thing, even an absurdity, is possible, probable or certain which flatters our hopes or desires, and incredible what we hate or fear—We judge of the character of foreign nations from what we know of a few of their individuals &c. But the most dangerous of all errors is to believe that all men and all nations think and act as we would ourselves act or think in like circumstances. Nothing is better calculated to cause us to turn our own weapons against ourselves, sparing the enemy the trouble of chastising our levity or presumption. In dealing with Mexicans, above all, our most reasonable expectations will always be baffled, on account of their peculiar aversion to every thing which is not Mexican, and of their natural and indomitable spirit of contradiction with the rest of mankind, even in their most trifling private transactions. With us money is heaven, the supreme felicity; with the Mexicans, all money not positively indispensable to live, is an indifferent superfluity.

Let us now glance at some other topics on our subject, peculiarly affecting public order at home.

The recommendation of president Polk involves necessarily a serious question in law. The senator, who of late has insisted that Congress should know what is to be done with the money, repudiating the idea that it should be placed at the discretion and control of the president, is perfectly right. If we wish to have our Constitution, that already to much contemned *palladium* of our liberties, not completely pulverized by Mr. Polk, let us pay some attention to the legality of his endeavors to obtain the so much desired appropriation.

The Constitution of the United States, Art. 1, Sect. IX 6. ordains:

"No money shall be drawn from the treasury but in consequence of appropriations made *by law*; and a regular statement

and account of the receipt and expenditures of all *public money*, shall be published from time to time."

From the letter of this article every common mind discovers the eagerness which actuated the wise framers of that instrument for the proper administration of the national finances, jealously guarding it against all abuse detrimental to them.

*By law*—But is a law to be enacted upon mysterious assertions and vague requests of the Executive, that is, *non cognita caussa* in all its details and aspects, clearly and fully specified, examined and debated? Shall the mere manifestation of an object, the practicability of which is not demonstrated, but is apparently highly doubtful and impropable, authorize an appropriation of three millions of dollars, which might either compromise our national honor if destined to *buy* a peace, a peace which can now be neither *bought*, nor *conquered*, or even legalize a criminal *peculation?* Will congress, in whom the sovereignty of the people solely and exclusively resides by delegation, be wilfully a servile instrument of executive transactions, known to the president alone, whose constitutional responsibility is rendered null and void by the very same spirit of party, which has made him president?

"Should it (the appropriation) be made, the president says, "and be not needed, it will remain in the Treasury. Should "it be *deemed proper* to apply it in whole or in part, it will be "accounted for as other public expenditures."

*Quæritur.*

1st. Who is to *deem proper* the application of the money in whole or in part? The president? Then we have a single man disposing of three millions of dollars of the public money, according to *his own judgment and pleasure*, in open defiance of the letter and spirit of the Constitution; an act of which there is no example even under the most despotic governments; an act which insults reason and cannot fail to awake the indignation of all patriots.

2d. Who is to *account for the money*, if not needed? the president? Well; I believe him to be honesty itself personified; but, if cheated by Santa Anna or others, if the victim of a mistaken calculation, or if (by way of argument) suspected or found guilty of embezzlement, is he able to re-imburse the Treasury? If he has no such ability, if no body else, who might become responsible for the money (for there is no infallibility on earth) be able to refund it, what then? Fictitious wants could be alleged to justify the *improper* use of the money—what remedy then? A sum of three millions of dollars is rather tempting—honor with some persons is but fried fish—and punishment is out of the question. We have seen defaulters to the

amount of hundreds of thousands, arrested, bailed to the amount of a few thousands, joyfully forfeiting the reconnoissance, enjoying, in full security the fruit of their knavery in distant climates, or even *honorably* continuing their residence among us, surrounded and courted by numerous admirers of their high respectability. Buy the pens of half a dozen *leading* editors, and all wrong becomes innocence, justice and right. Hence so many rapid and gigantic fortunes, which the humbuged people are made to believe the fruit of American enterprise, skill, and honorable toil.

Finally, on certain honest senators having justly manifested their apprehension that *slavery* might be introduced in any portion of the Mexican territory, the acquisition of which is in Mr. Polk's contenplation, others have wittily observed that this question is entirely *irrelevant* to the three millions appropriation bill. What connection, say they, has *slavery* with a treaty to be made with Mexico (a bribe to be offered)? In treating with Mexico, the president will have no conditions to make about slavery. Mexico has nothing to do with our domestic institutions. Our congress alone has a legal authority in this matter &c. I ask your pardon, gentlemen. Every honest lawgiver has a right, and it is his indispensable duty, after the scandalous example of Texas, to vote no money for the acquisition of any foreign lands, unless certain that no *slavery* will ever be introduced there; and as the three millions solicited by Mr. Polk are said to be intended to pay for the acquisition of Mexican territories, where no *slavery* exists, our national legislature should grant no money for that purpose, unless irrevocably forbidding its introduction in such territories. Our constitution has already been a thousand times capriciously interpreted as to the pretended rights of the present states about *slavery*. Shall not, before the admission of new states or territories to this Union, all questions about *slavery* be clearly and unequivocally solved, in order to prevent all further propagation, nay the perpetuation of that abominable scourge amidst an enlightened, humane and christian nation?

But, to conclude about the three million bill. In justice to President James Knox Polk, we should admire his prudence in atoning for his *prodigality* towards his beloved cousin Santa Anna by the *economical* spirit, by which he has been actuated in warmly recommending to Congress, in the same message (if the term message can properly be applied to a low pleading of an ignorant barrister), that "*no appropriations* be made "by Congress, except such as are absolutely necessary for "the *vigorous prosecution of the war* (by buying a speedy

' peace), and the due administration of the government (his "daily stipend of $68.50 included, of course").

*No appropriation—!* admirable economy! We must conclude, therefore, that the blood of his countrymen shed abroad is not euough for the complement of Mr. Polk's glory; he wants also to bathe in their tears at home. He wants to plunge our ex-claimants on France and Mexico, now creditors of the *United States*, into misery and disgrace. He wants to throw them into jail as bankrupts, and delight himself with the distressing groans of the aged, the helpless child, the destitute widow! Three millions of dollars to the enemy, not a cent to a friend! *No appropriation!* This is the loving language of our *pater patriæ!* He has *conquered*, nay *annexed* to our country nearly half of the Mexican empire, and recommends *no appropriations* for the payment of the very Mexican debt, which has been the false pretext of his war and conquests, and which scarcely amounts to one million and a half of dollars! A haughty and contemptuous silence is his answer to all remonstrances firmly grounded on the law of nations, and on our own fundamental law! Very well, Mr. President, go ahead; but hear Seneca:

"*Quidquid in altum fortuna tulit, ruitura levat.*"

And now hear Horace:

"*Raro antecedentem scelestum*
"*Deseruit pede pœna claudo.*"

S. * * *

United States, February 7th, 1847.

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## THE LETTER OF GENERAL SANTA ANNA TRANSLATED AD LITERAM FROM SPANISH INTO ENGLISH.

Vera Cruz, October 11th, 1831.

My Esteemed Friend:—I have the pleasure to answer your favor of the 5th ultimo, by which I perceive that my letter of the 9th April last, came to hand. I have received the prospectus of the "Foreign College" you contemplate to establish, which not only meets with my entire approbation, but, considering your talents and uncommon acquirements, I congratulate you on employing them in a manner so generally useful, and personally honorable. I thank you cordially for the news and observations you have had the kindness to communicate to me, and both make me desire the continuation of your esteemed epistles. Retired as I am, on my farm, and there exclusively devoted to the cultivation and improvement of my small estate, I cannot reply, as I desire, to the news with which you have favored me. But, even in that retirement, and though separated from the arena of politics, I could never view with indifference any discredit thrown on my country, nor any thing which might, in the smallest degree, possess that tendency. We enjoy at present peace and tranquility, and I do not know of any other question of public interest now in agitation, than the approaching *elections of President* and Vice President. When that period shall arrive, should I obtain a majority of suffrages, I am *ready to accept* the honor, and to sacrifice, for the benefit of the na-

tion, my repose and the charms of private life. My fixed system is *to be called* (ser llamado), resembling in this a *modest maid* (modesta doncella), *who rather expects to be desired, than to show herself to be desiring.* I think that my position justifies me in this respect. Nevertheless, as what is written in a foreign country has much influence at home, especially among us, in your city I think it proper to *make a great step on this subject;* and by fixing the true aspect, in which such or such services should be regarded, as respects the various candidates, one could undoubtedly contribute *to fix here public opinion, which is at present extremely wavering and uncertain.* Of course, this is the peculiar province of the friends of Mexico; and as well by this title, as on account of the acquirements and instruction you possess, *I know of no one better qualified than yourself to execute such a benevolent undertaking* * * * * * *

I hope you will favor me from time to time with information, which will always give satisfaction to your *true friend* and servant, who kisses your hands.

ANTONIO LOPEZ DE SANTA ANNA.

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EXTRACT FROM A "STATEMENT OF FACTS," PUBLISHED IN THE CITY OF WASHINGTON ON THE 22d OF OCTOBER, 1841, page 144.

A SENTENCE—

(*After an Indictment containing eight counts.*)

"For these considerations, for the present, I do publicly declare, loudly pronounce, firmly assert, conscientiously swear, and irrevocably decree:

1st. That Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna is a *liar*, a *coward*, a *scoundrel*, an *impostor*, a *traitor*, a *disgrace to mankind:*

2dly. That should the Mexican nation ever place him again or suffer him to place himself there, at its head, it ought and must be deemed to be, from the oldest to the youngest, from the richest to the poorest, from the strongest to the weakest of its citizens, nothing but a pitiful gang of stupid, ignorant, demoralized, debased fools:

3dly. That *all governments in the world*, who may be so unprincipled as to engage *at any time* in the least intercourse with Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, as the chief, under whatever title, of the Mexican nation, should be looked upon as *entirely destitute of honor*, and worthy only of the *execration of their subjects*, and of the contempt of all reasonable beings.

4th. That this my sovereign and irrevocable decree shall be translated into French, the universal language of diplomacy, and circulated, as far as possible, all over the globe.

Done and given under my hand and seal, in the city of Washington, district of Columbia, in the United States of America, this twenty-second day of October, the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and forty one, and the first day of the sixty-eighth year of my age &c."

RB 9.3

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